

COMMENTS

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Once again, we are stimulated by a set of excellent papers on problems in Korean linguistics. These studies exemplify both the virtues and the faults of recent linguistic theory. What makes the Chomskyan— and [post-Chomskyan— approach to the study of language so particularly seductive to bright young minds is that it encourages highly imaginative speculation, and the results are fun even when they turn out to be wrong. The weakness of the approach is its failure to provide criteria by which the results of the speculation can either be validated or be disconfirmed. The locus of linguistic reality for the generative grammarian is a perversely inaccessible realm of logical rules that probably exists only in the eye of the philosopher.

In seeking empirical confirmation of generative hypotheses we can look to two areas: (1) the historical consequences, as seen in what is known of earlier stages of the language and whatever is indicated about future stages from current trends and variations in usage; (2) the psychological reactions of native speakers, insofar as these can be measured... and by this I refer to something more objective than the "intuitions" of professional linguists, whether native speakers or not.

Having voiced my biases, I will now turn to the papers. Professor **Cook** takes up Professor Kim's attempt to regularize certain "anomalous" classes of Korean verbs by postulating invariant underlying shapes for the bases and offers now proposals of admirable ingenuity. Kim had explained both the alternation of *p* with *w* in the "*p*-anomalous" bases and the alternation of *t* (or reflexes of *t*) with the flapped allophone of /l/ in the "*t*-anomalous" bases, by assuming that the stopped versions are the result of a kind of hardening process of basic *w* and *r*, under the general principle of "implosion" or suppression of consonant release as found in the syllable-final allophones of *p*, *t* and *k*. Cook would substitute clusters of *-wp-* and *-lt-* in the underlying forms and use this to account for the vowel length of the bases, as well as the anomalous behavior of the final consonants. It seems to me that we must treat the "*p*-anomalous" and "*t*-anomalous" verbs together with the "*s*-anomalous" verbs... those which alternate zero with reflexes of the phoneme /s/, such as *cis. ta* 'builds' with infinitive *cie* where we would expect *cis.e*. The question is, why do these three sets

of verbs differ from the regular consonant bases? If the infinitive of *kōpta* 'is bent' is *kop.a*, why does *kōpta* 'is pretty' have the infinitive *kowa*? If the infinitive of *mut.ta* 'buries' is *mut.e*, why does *mūt.ta* 'inquires' have the infinitive *mul.e*? If the infinitive of *wus.ta* 'laugh' is *wus.e*, why is the infinitive of *cis.ta* 'builds' not **cis.e* but rather *cie*?

We must bear in mind that there are dialects spoken today in which the anomalous verbs are regular: *kop.a* is the infinitive for 'pretty', *mut.e* is the infinitive for 'bury,' and *cis.e* is the infinitive for 'build'. (In the Cincwu dialect of South Kyengsang this verb is irregularly *cie*, but other "s-anomalous" bases preserve the -s-, according to one source.) Two explanations suggest themselves: Either these dialects have lost a distinction preserved in the standard language of central Korea, or the standard language has developed a distinction that was absent from its ancestor. The latter is clearly what happened. The allophones of *p* and *t* between vowels were always voiced, as they are today, [b] and [d]; in the 15th century, the phoneme /s/ was pronounced [z] in certain varieties of Korean for which we have only sporadic written evidence. In particular words—and not all of them are verbs—the [b] weakened to a spirant [β] and eventually a semivocalic [w], merging with the phoneme /w/ that came from a reduction of a vowel quality; the [d] weakened to a flap [r], which merged with the intervocalic allophone of the phoneme /l/; and the intervocalic version of the phoneme /s/ gave up its attempt at voicing, letting the older voiceless version win the battle of dialect rivalry.

Well, then, why didn't all this happen to the regular verbs ending in *p*, *t*, and *s*? Perhaps because of the accentual conditions which have caught professor Cook's attention. The modern vowel length is a development from the low-high rising pitch of Middle Korean, and apparently all the anomalous consonant bases carried this accent. But why, then, isn't *wūs.ta* 'laughs' anomalous, since it has the same accentuation? Written evidence from Middle Korean indicates that this verb should have gone the way of *cis.ta* in the modern standard language, but the regular treatment somehow won out, and we say *wus.e* rather than **wue*. (A side problem is the suppression of the vowel length before endings beginning with a vowel; however, this holds for all long-vowel bases: *kēm.ta* : *kēm.e* 'black', *mēl.ta* : *mel.e* 'distant'. The few exceptions, such as *pēl.ta* : *pēl.e* 'earns', are probably recent reductions from diphthongs.)

This means that historically we have no need for the extra underlying /r/ of Kim's treatment, nor do we find evidence for the clusters that Cook would posit. Are these hypothetical entities needed to account for the way the standard speaker puts his forms

together today? Here, again, I think the answer is no. To the extent that the speaker makes up forms by rule rather than by analogy — and the importance of analogy in language has been much underrated and grossly misunderstood by the generative grammarian—we can put the matter as follows:

- (1) The “*p*-anomalous” bases are consonant bases that end in the phoneme /w/.
- (2) The “*t*-anomalous” bases are consonant bases that end in the phoneme /l/, heard only in its allophone of flapped [ɾ].

Those bases which alternate the allophone of the flapped [ɾ] with the lateral /l/, such as *mēlta* : *mel.e*, are essentially vowel bases which pick up an /l/ extension under certain phonological conditions. The dichotomy of vowel vs. consonant bases must be recognized before further consideration can be given to the selection of shapes for the endings, whether this is done by analogy or by rule. (In the favorite generative treatment, the *u*-epenthesis rules are dependent upon this decision.)

(3) The “*s*-anomalous” bases can be treated as simply irregular; there are fewer than ten of these, in any event. If, in a generative treatment, a separated underlying form is required, they can be said to end in the *-q-* of my treatment of the phonemes, which could be extended to be a catch-all or mystery consonant in clusters to account for the reinforced allophones of the initials in words like *ttal* ‘daughter’. (This is a recent notion of mine which would account for the reinforced consonants as simply the plain consonants appearing in the allophones we expect after any voiceless stop (as is true of intervocalic *-pt-*, *-kc-*, *-ps-*, etc.); where there is no overt consonant (as is true initially) we assume a mystery phoneme *q* which fails to surface except as instigator of the following phoneme’s reinforced allophone. Historically and even morphophonemically... this *q-* is sometimes the remnant of a genuinely attested consonant, now suppressed.)

The double-*ll* vowel bases are another story. Here I think Professor Cook’s account is substantially correct. Professor Kim surprisingly seems to have ignored the fact that the critical phonetic representation of his underlying “l” in the infinitive of these forms (*puluta* : *pulle* ‘call’) spreads over the syllable boundary, being a long lateral coda followed by a lateral onset [l : l], clearly to be interpreted as a double /ll/, since otherwise we will be unable to predict the syllable boundaries so automatically. There are a handful of exceptional verbs : *chiluta* : *chile* ‘pay’ (where we expect **chille*); the three bases that are like *iluta* : *ilule* ‘reaches’ and certain regional or idiosyncratic oddities. These are sporadic developments, probably owing to dialect mixture of long standing, and are best described as simply

irregular.

Professor **Kim**'s paper on "gravity" is really about the LACK of gravity, i.e. the instability of the apical articulation in Korean, as compared [with the velar and labial articulations. He has made some interesting observations which I believe to be correct with the following exceptions. I do not believe that Korean (or any other language, for that matter) has created very much of its phonetic stuff out of nothing. Those words which Kim assumes to have picked up an excrescent *p*, *m*, *k*, or *ng* either had the final consonant to begin with or have added a meaningful suffix. To give but one example from Kim's list: *cek* 'time' is cognate with Japanese *toki*: it is the variant *cey* which is to be explained. When I once heard a Korean say *hanak ssik* 'one apiece' I was surprised at the final *k* on *hana* 'one'; later I saw the Middle Korean spelling with a final *-h* and felt less surprised. While I hold the utmost admiration and gratitude for the scholarship of Professor ¹Yi Swungnyeng, I am somewhat doubtful about his ingenious hypothesis of *-ng*- functioning as a filler of hiatus; I believe most of the cases he cites can be explained in other, and better, ways. To give but a single instance, the *ng* in *punge* 'carp' (and many other fish names) is due to the fact that the morpheme for 'fish' began with a velar nasal in Middle Chinese, as we can tell from the Sino-Japanese *gyo*.

Most of my comments have been devoted to the papers on phonology because I feel less competent to judge the arguments in the papers on syntax. I am impressed with the recent work of **Chang Suk-Jin** and others in shedding new light on the illocutionary aspects of Korean sentence structure. This work is particularly valuable, it seems to me, when seeking to discover overt manifestations of illocutionary elements. For that reason, I would like to see Professor Chang and his colleagues give close observation to the use of sentence-final structures of the type *hanta kwu/ko* (etc.) and of the type *hanta 'nta* (*hanta 'p.nita*, etc.). On the former, see the note on p.396 of my *Beginning Korean*. On the latter, see the entry *-ta 'nta* in the *Yale Korean-English Dictionary*.

My view of the continuing debate over Korean negation is positive: the field is obviously rich in content. I have been much attracted by **Song**'s description, quite independently of the alleged degree of updateness or purity of its theoretical frame, an issue which I find more bemusing than disturbing. I would, in fact, go a step further and carry Song's analysis to its logical conclusion by saying that the surface form *tutulkinta* 'beats' is simply a phonetic shortening of the structure **twutulki-KI/-CI hanta* 'does beating'. For a number of years now I have taken a similar view of the finite forms of Japanese verbs, but the

Korean evidence had seemed less persuasive. The historical implications of these ideas are vexing, however, and call for exploration in a broader perspective. On the question of whether there is a difference of meaning between *An twutulkinta* and *Twutulkici(lul) ani hanta*, perhaps the following hypothesis will hold. The adverbs *an(i)* and *mōs* are not sentential adverbs to be derived from logical predicates; they serve to negate the verb form only. The structures *V-ci lul ani hanta* and *A-Ci(ka) ani hanta*, on the other hand, deny the entire sentence. Since denying the sentence will include a denial of the verb form, there is an overlap of meaning, and frequently the scope of the negation will make little difference; as a result, we often appear to have synonymous sentences in such pairs as *An ponta* and *Poci anh.nunta*, *Mōs ponta* and *Poci mōs hanta*. But the synonym is not complete, as Professor Song's examples show. I believe he will find additional support for his position in a detailed study of the kinds of negation allowed for adjectival and copular sentences, but I have not had the time to explore the question myself.

Sohn Ho-min makes beautifully clear the formal basis for the feeling we have surely all had, that it is necessary to distinguish auxiliary to verbs from main verbs. The current fad by which some generativists would impute to virtually all elements that are not nouns (and even to some nouns!) the status of main verb is a gesture that merely moves the problem from one level to another; in classifying the behavior of "main verbs" you will end up finding certain sub-classes corresponding to our auxiliaries, which show important differences from "real" main verbs; Sohn shows us what these differences are. Of the various properties he describes, it seems to me that the sixth is perhaps the most important: the auxiliary forms a close-knit unit with the main verb it is in construction with, so that the two move together under the various "scramblings" permitted by the relatively free word order of Korean. Sohn's discussion centers on three classes of auxiliaries: those that follow the infinitive *-e*, those that follow the gerund *-ko*, and those that follow the adverbial (or "adverbative") *-key*. Among the forty-odd auxiliaries that I have listed in my long-delayed but still forthcoming *Korean Reference Grammar* there are a very few that follow other forms: *V-ulye(ko) tu-l-* 'threaten(try, be about) to do'; *V-na(A-un, V-nun ka) po-* 'look as though'; *-na/ -ta/-ulila/-umyen siph-* 'feel(as if)'. For each auxiliary it is important to note whether it can ever be separated from the preceding form by some such element as, minimally, the plural-subject reminder *tul* or the focus markers (*un/nun*, to); and whether it can be pre-emphasized (sometimes with vivid or jocular effect) by attaching to the preceding form the accusative marker *ul/lul*, or sometimes the nominative *i/ka*, as mentioned under

Sohn's third property. Most auxiliary constructions are separable, but some will not permit even *tul* or juncture to intervene. In my list, the following are inseparable: V-*e chi-* 'do hard', V/A-*e ssah-* 'do/be to a more than ample extent', V/A-*e ppa-ci-* '(get old, rotten, musty, etc.) through and through', V-*e (p)pe-li-* 'do completely', V-*e mek-* vulgarizer, V-*e nāy-* 'do all the way', V-*e cilu-*=V-*e ttuli-* transitivizer or intensifier of transitivity; A/V-*e ci-* (1) intransitivizer or intensifier of intransitivity, (2) 'get to be'; V-*e tu-le/tul.i-* 'do into, upon, at' (unless these are to be taken as lexical compounds), V-*na*(A-*un ka*, V-*nun ka*) *pota* 'look as though', -*na/-ta/-ulila/-umyen siph-* 'feel(as if)'. There are also well over thirty "postnominal verbs", such as the separable *he-*(with verbal nouns), *sikhi-*, *toy-*, *puli-*, etc.; and the inseparable *tāy*=*keli-*, *ha-*(with mimetics), *taw-*, *sulew-*, etc. The productivity of some of the auxiliaries seems to be quite low and we might do well to treat such constructions as lexical or idiomatic; of those in my lists this would be particularly true of V-*e tāy-*, V-*e chi-*, V/A-*e ssah-*, V/A-*e ppa-ci-*, V-*e nāy*-V/A-*e mek-*.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the authors of these papers for their well-conceived ideas and lucidly written discussions. The number of those working in the field of Korean linguistics is low, but I am pleased to observe that the quality of the work being done is impressively high.